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Nellie Robinson Stretton

HER BOOK

Do Not Look in This Book



Class TP83537

Book T835 H4

NELLIE ROBINSON STRETTON

HER BOOK.



By trans.
White House.

PS 3537
T835H4

HAYWORTH PUBLISHING HOUSE.



WASHINGTON, D. C.

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ED. 11-12-13
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Sincerely,

Nellie Robinson Stretton.

*DEDICATED TO
MY BELOVED
FATHER AND MOTHER.*

"LEST WE FORGET."

I.

Here's a cheer for every hero undiscovered,
And a song for every ship that sails the sea;
For the life that goes with every canker covered,
All undaunted down the road of destiny.

II.

Here's a word for every man that is defeated,
And a tear for every brave, in anguish pale;
And a hope for every heart all sin depleted,
And a line for every light "that e'en must fail."

III.

Here's a sob for all who sit in sorrow riven,
Weeping low within the murky halls of shame,
Here's a prayer that every sinner be forgiven,
Dreaming Earth-Dreams in the gilded halls of
Fame.

IV.

Here's a smile for every man that fortune flatters,
And a sigh for every soul afar from home,
For the wearers of the tags of passion's tatters,
And the man that knows but one road into
Rome.

V.

Here's a lift for every bearer of a burden,
Toiling on within the iron bands of fate,
And for all who climb aloft without a guerdon ;
 Just a push to place their feet within the gate.

PROCESSIONAL.

FEAR NOT.

Despite the stings misfortune brings,
 Thou wilt achieve—for men were ever kings
 Who bent the bow, and bound the book of fate;
 Who sprung the lock and opened wide the gate
 Where knowledge, truth, and power sat insensate.

FALL NOT.

But if perchance that thou shouldst fall,
 Look up; re-read the writing on the wall,
 And shake the sloth of gay Belshazzar's feast,
 And break the oath that bound thee to the beast,
 And swear allegiance with high honor's priest.

FAIL NOT.

But if defeat then thou must know,
 Quail not—man unto man hath made it so—
 But lift thy fevered face toward the height,
 And lave thy brow and dare the infinite,
 And bid achievement set thy failure right.

FAINT NOT.

Thou manacled and fettered low;
 Break bond and bid thy captor let thee go;
 And rive thy gyves and set thy shackles free.
 And break the bond that crushes liberty,
 And rend and mend the chain of destiny.

BYE AND BYE.

All the storm-clouds will be rifting,
 And the burdens will be lifting,
 And the shadows will be shifting,
 Bye and bye.

For the world-thrusts will be fewer,
 And the Heavens will be bluer,
 And the true will all be truer.
 Bye and bye.

SOMEWHERE.

Somewhere the sun must shine, Love,
And every sky be blue.
There is each hour supine, Love,
And every heart-beat true.

Somewhere the birds must sing, Love;
While 'neath them flowers blow.
Somewhere must pain take wing, Love,
And there is hope aglow.

Somewhere all things are fair, Love,
And men are strong and true.
And they will do and dare; Love,
The whole long journey through.

Somewhere there is no care, Love,
And smooth is every sea,
And there ascends a prayer, Love,
Sent Heavenward for thee.

Somewhere the storm is o'er, Love,
Somewhere the night is past;
Some ship has reached the shore, Love—
Safe harbor found at last.

NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME.

I.

Then forget, forget your sorrow,
And your anger hide away;
For there ne'er will be to-morrow,
For to-morrow is to-day.

II.

Neither strife nor trouble borrow,
Life is but a passing day;
Storms to-night and suns to-morrow,
And at last the twilight gray.

III.

As we linger, all unlearned,
At the doorway of life's school,
Scan we pages yet unturned
That must meet the Master's rule.

IV.

We must learn that others o'er us,
Who have scaled Pisgah's height,
Love not less because before us,
They have reached the goal aright.

V.

For the eagle hath high eyrie,
And the dove low bough to coo,
And the message for the weary,
Lies near earth, and close by you.

VI.

We may meet, upon the highway,
Gaudy-gowned in gilt and gold,
Or may greet, in darksome byway,
Just lost sheep without the fold.

VII.

So no strife nor trouble borrow,
Scatter sunshine on the way;
For there ne'er will be to-morrow,
And December follows May.

VOICE OF THE ALWAYS.

I.

From afar there comes a murmur and a motion;
'Tis the sound of countless voices o'er the sea.
Like the waves that lash the bosom of old ocean,
Rolling Westward in the search for liberty.
'Tis the voices of the people, aye, the people;
They who fight oppressions gods and fight alone;
For the prayers that rise and pierce the heart of
heaven,
Never yet went high enough to reach a throne.

II.

Asking deeds instead of creeds from witless canters,
All unmindful of a God they can not ken;
Holding that the true disciple of the Master,
Only needs to know and love his fellowmen.
Like the flash that lights the summit of the mountain,
Like the waves that beat their crests upon the shore,
Like the murmur and the gurgle of the fountain,
They will flash and beat and pulsate evermore.

III.

Down the centuries they plod across the levels,
Thorny crowned they bear the world toward the
height:
Little knowing if they serve for men or devils,
Eagle eyed to catch the dawning of the right.
Up the ages still unborn the voices tremble,
Lest the future when revealed for them may be,
Heavy laden with the stains of Revolution,
Turning black the sacred page of history.

IV.

Brother, callow liest thou among the sleepers,
Striking platitudes before thy fellowmen.
Thinkest thou to brush the garments of the lepers,
And escape, unscathed, from the lion's den?
Nay, the eye that marks the passing of the races,
And the force that smites the powers of mockery
And the hand that guides the planets through the
spaces,
Shall arise and lead His hosts to vi tory!

"PEACE BE UNTO THEM."

All quiet they lie on the hillside to-day,
Our soldier boys peacefully dreaming,
With never a thought of the rush and the fray,
Or the Heaven so blue o'er them gleaming,
The leafage of Autumn their couches enfold,
Enwraps them in amber, scarlet and gold,
But never, ah never, the half has been told,
Of the dreaming, peacefully dreaming.

So softly they sleep that the birds overhead,
Go alighting, all gently and tender,
With many a curious glance at the bed,
Of our National Honor's defender.
The wind of November their requiem sings,
The birth of the Winter around them it clings,
And whispers a story of wonderful things—
To the sleeping, peacefully sleeping.

All quiet they lie with stars overhead,
Our soldier boys, peacefully sleeping,
For gone is the sight of the battle-field red,
And the wail and the woe and the weeping,
For numberless millions their story shall sing,
And down through the ages their glory shall ring,
And ever about them Love's halo shall cling—
To the sleeping, peacefully sleeping.

The moon and the stars and the heaven above,
Look downward, with faces all gleaming,
And whispers the story of brotherly love,
To the blue and the gray ever dreaming,
And the Bard of the future their story shall tell,
How nobly they fought and how bravely they fell,
And angels shall echo the cry, "All is well,"
With the sleeping, peacefully sleeping.

WHISPERS.

I.

In the hour and the flower of defeat,
Never falter¹, never lay the burden down.
Quaff the cup and drink the bitter and the sweet;
Wear a smile—hide the cross beneath the crown.

II.

For the waters of the Lethe oft shall fail,
Thrice the cock shall crow to gray Gethsemanæ,
And the vision of the star is passing pale,
For the man upon the road to calvary.

III.

For our souls are cathedrals dim and cold,
Many windowed that all colors may shine in,
And our hearts are only gross without the gold,
'Till the crucible has burned away the sin.

IV.

And our tears are only tears when they fall,
Our roses only roses while they blow,
And the clay that shapens in the Potter's thrall,
Maybe turned and burned to marble ere we go.

V.

Let the mummer and the gibber play his part,
'Tis for thee to meet the Gorgon's of all seas;
'Tis to walk alone and poised in the mart,
And in silence drink the wine of Socrates.

VI.

Our pleasures are but pleasures while they please;
And our sorrows only sorrows while they last;
And the tide that bears our barques toward the seas
Is the tide that bears them homeward at the last.

THE LIE THAT GOD FORGIVES.

The Lie that buries Slander deep,
The Lie that puts a Lie to sleep,
And makes the hardened Liar weep,—
Is the one that God forgives.

The Lie that saves a woman's name,
The Lie that spares a man from shame,
The Lie that shoulders all the blame,—
Is the one that God forgives.

A Lie that makes the sinner sad,
The Lie that makes the righteous glad,
The Lie that makes the Liar mad,—
Is the one that God forgives.

"BITTER SWEET."

Thorns must be where roses flourish,
Fertile soil may thistles nourish,
And in every heart
Pain and pleasure intermingle,
And 'tis thus, forever, single
Victims for their dart.

Ever into sweetest pleasure,
Sadness creeps, mars our treasure,
As a cloud the day;
But affliction oft is better,
Though her shackles bind and fetter,
Pandora will stay.

Human souls are like the treasure,
Dross and gold, measure for measure,
Gathered from the mine;
And a wisdom that is lasting,
Into strange paths each life casting,
And a power divine,

Saith until all things living,
Whom the light of life 'tis giving:
Life is incomplete;
No joy is replete or finished,
But by sorrow is diminished,
Always "Bitter Sweet."

WHAT WE MAY DO.

I.

I would leave here—ere I go
If our Father will it so—
Not a monument all high
Reaching upward to the sky;
Not a heritage of land,
Nor a palace great and grand,
But one song all soft and low
I would leave before I go.

II.

I would leave here when I go
Just a name as white as snow—
To the weary wanderer, rest;
Peace for every troubled breast;
Surcease from the endless toil
For the ones who know but toil,
Hope for every aching heart—
Smiles, where flowing tears now start.

III.

I would give the sightless sight,
Every wrong I would set right,
And the darkness turn to light
And wash out the world's blight,
Raise the weak and fallen, too,
Help all men the journey through,
Deeds instead of creeds I'd sow
Ere the Homeward trail I go.

BACKWARD GLANCING.

Darkest sin lies silent there.
Go and banish sin with care,
And with just another prayer
Start again the New Year fair.

Noble aims have come to nought,
High desires misfortunes brought.
But the lessons they have taught
Are with weightier virtues fraught.

Kindly words have been in vain.
Tenderest wishes lost in pain.
Word and wish will bloom again,
Like a rose-bud after rain.

Trusted friends have proved untrue
Now does Judas flourish too?
But there still remains to you,
Memory of a faithful few.

Mighty souls have lost the fight;
Losing self and choosing right
But the day must follow night,
Hope can never take its flight.

Powerful creeds have passed away.
Mighty deeds have gone astray,
But the light of yesterday,
Will suffice in after-way.

LIGHT.

“Let there be light,” the great Creator said,
And there was light. He lifted up His head,
And over all the world that radiance shone,
From North to South, diffused o’er every zone.
First o’er the Eastern world was knowledge cast,
Made Nations wise in ages that are past,
Deep drunk the world at the Pierian Spring,
And, thirsting thus, in kindred soul did bring
Their comrade nations to the enlightening fount,
And step by step the ancient world did mount,
And drink this light of knowledge shed abroad,
Which grew apace. The Eastern world stood awed,
While Greece brought forth her nobles works of
man.

Her arts, productions mighty, God’s own plan.

“Let there be light,” o’er all the earth ’twas spread.
It reached America, and forests bowed their head
Beneath the sharpened ax; a Nation wise
Came, freedomward, toward our Western skies,
Fair nature’s work then yielded to the stroke,
Low lay the head of the imperious oak;
And nature’s rude, though beauteous domains,
Gave up their solitude, the hills and plains,
Adorned by the architectural works of man
Smile forth enlightenment, the world’s first plan.
Fair freedom shields us with her sheltering arm,
And knowledge lights our path; how sweet the
charm
Of Light; which out of chaos, brought forth knowl-
edge, freedom, peace.

MESSAGES.

'Tis the click, click, click, of the wire we hear,
From hour to hour and from year to year,
And the words that bear joy, or life or woe,
Ah, how little we of their meaning know,
For we hear but the sound and know no more,
And the messages speed to the other shore.

But perchance, like wind, o'er the fateful wire,
Forth the herald goes, dreadful, ghastly, dire;
And the nation sighs awhile in grief,
But like life, all human woes are brief;
And the poignancy of our sorrow o'er,
Thus the echo dies and is heard no more.

And thus, as the world and time sweeps on,
Like the message sent, so our lives have gone;
And who can tell what each message bore,
But the master hand that sent them o'er?

DEDICATED TO THE NEWSBOYS.

Up and down this busy city,
Always rushing to and fro
With a cry that seldom ceases
See the newsboys come and go;
Calling "Here's you evening paper"
Gathering pennies everywhere
Waifs upon a human ocean,
Fate has cast them here, now there.

Now the millionaire he passes;
Now the beggar, clad in rags;
Patiently to win, he striving
And his labor never flags;
Little lives of brave endeavor
That may teach to you and me
Of a patience more enduring
Drifting on life's turbid sea.

Then due honor to the newsboys
Treat them kindly while you can,
For the years are swiftly passing
Newsboy once but now a man;
And I hope success and honor
He may gather on the way
Then three cheers to help him onward
Speed the newsboy of to-day.

DIGGING DUSTY DIAMONDS.

Down deep in the earth where the sun ne'er shines,
 Nor the daylight comes in the darksome mines;
 Where naught is heard but the constant roar,
 Of the car-wheels on the entry floor,
 Here live and labor the world's true men,
 In patient silence, they ne'er complain.

Years pass, and the daylight ne'er pervades
 The endless night of those constant shades;
 But the miner works and complaineth not,
 Well content with what his toil has wrought;
 For he thinks of the dear ones left at home,
 'Tis for them he strives, and for them alone.
 But he oftentimes hopes for a better way
 Than to labor, shut from the light of day.

For, though roughly clad though the miner seems
 From the soul within the true worth gleams;
 For the purest gem, so the poet said,
 Is imprisoned oft in the sea's dark bed;
 And the noblest soul may be roughly clad,
 While gold hides the defects of the bad.
 But a brighter day is dawning fast,
 And the world shall awake to the truth at last.

THANKSGIVING.

It is autumn; in the country all the sheaves are put
away,
And the barren trees stand leafless on this blest
Thanksgiving Day;
All the summer's work is ended and the farmer
is content,
For his toil hath not been wasted, but hath greater
blessings lent.
All the sorrows and displeasures of the past year
fade away,
And the world itself seems brighter on this great
memorial day.

In the great heart of the city where thousands come
and go,
Where misery, want and suffering unite their tales
of woe;
Where all the flash and glimmer of wealth hath lent
its charms,
And pitted 'gainst the lowly in contrast that
alarms.
There's not a true heart throbbing in all that
throng to-day
But thanks God for some blessing, be humble as it
may.

All over our fair country doth peace and plenty
 reign;
The world respects our nation—her record bears
 no stain,
That strife that once was kindled between the
 South and North
Leaves but regret and sorrow and calls our pity
 forth;
So we as one great nation can to the whole world
 say
That we are truly thankful this blest Thanksgiving
 Day.

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